

State of Vermont House of Representatives



Montpelier, Vermont

Joint House Resolution

J.R.H. 19

Joint resolution urging Congress to support statehood and all accompanying legal rights and privileges for the District of Columbia

Offered by: Representatives McCormack of Burlington, Brennan of Colchester, Burke of Brattleboro, Deen of Westminster, Donovan of Burlington, Krebs of South Hero, Lucke of Hartford, Mrowicki of Putney, Murphy of Fairfax, Patt of Worcester, Russell of Rutland City, Sullivan of Burlington, and Townsend of South Burlington

Whereas, the U.S. Constitution, as ratified following the Constitutional Convention of 1787, granted the right to vote for congressional representation to qualified voters in all the states, including those living in the sections of Maryland and Virginia that the "District of Columbia Organic Act of 1801" (the Act) designated as the nation's capital, and

Whereas, the Act took this territory away from the states of Maryland and Virginia, disenfranchising District of Columbia's (the District) citizens from exercising the fundamental right to vote for public officials, and for over a century these American citizens could not participate in any local or federal election, and

Whereas, in 1961, the 23rd Amendment to the U.S. Constitution gave the District's electorate the right to vote in presidential elections, and

Whereas, in 1970, Congress enacted 2 U.S.C. § 25a, authorizing the District's voters to elect a nonvoting delegate to Congress, and

Whereas, in 1973, Congress enacted the District of Columbia Self-Government and Governmental Reorganization Act, establishing local mayoralty and city council elections in the District, and

Whereas, despite these legal advancements in the District's electoral and representational rights, the District's Delegate to Congress is prohibited from voting on the House floor, and the District is not represented in the U.S. Senate, and

Whereas, a truly democratic nation should not deny its citizens residing in the nation's capital city full representational rights in the U.S. Legislature, and

Whereas, the Organization of American States Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, of which the United States is a member and that is headquartered in the District, has declared that the residents of the

District have been denied an equal right under law to participate in their government, and

Whereas, Congress has, in some instances, barred the use of locally raised funds to implement municipally adopted laws and programs, an action it would not impose on a state, and

Whereas, the annual municipal budget that the locally elected District of Columbia City Council adopts is subject to congressional review and amendment, as if the District were a federal agency, and

Whereas, in recent years, Democrats and Republicans have introduced legislation to grant the District budget autonomy, most recently H.R. 552, the District of Columbia Budget Autonomy Act of 2015, and

Whereas, it has been over 50 years and 40 years respectively since the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the District of Columbia Self-Government and Governmental Reorganization Act of 1973, but residents of the District still lack the same congressional representational and complete self-government rights enjoyed in all 50 states, now therefore be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly urges Congress to support statehood and all accompanying legal rights and privileges for the District of Columbia, and be it further

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to President Barack Obama, to the U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, to the U.S. House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, to Speaker of the House Paul Ryan, and to the Vermont Congressional Delegation.